

Appendix L: Necedah NWR Yellow River Focus Area Land Protection Plan

Land Protection Plan

Revised March 2003

Introduction

In late 1996, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) initiated a planning process aimed at evaluating the feasibility of restoring and conserving approximately 21,953 acres of land located directly adjacent to the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). An expansion of 14,684 acres in the currently authorized Refuge boundaries is proposed under this plan to facilitate habitat restoration and conservation in a part of the Yellow River Focus Area (Figure 1). The planning process, which was done in association with the Refuge's Comprehensive Conservation Plan, included a thorough review of opportunities and issues related to fish and wildlife resource management by the Service in that area, as well as an assessment of roles the Service might take in achieving its mission, that of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and resource objectives for the Great Lakes/Big Rivers Region. The planning process was initiated in response to the declining status of numerous Service trust resources in the area and interest among diverse stakeholders within the area and the region.

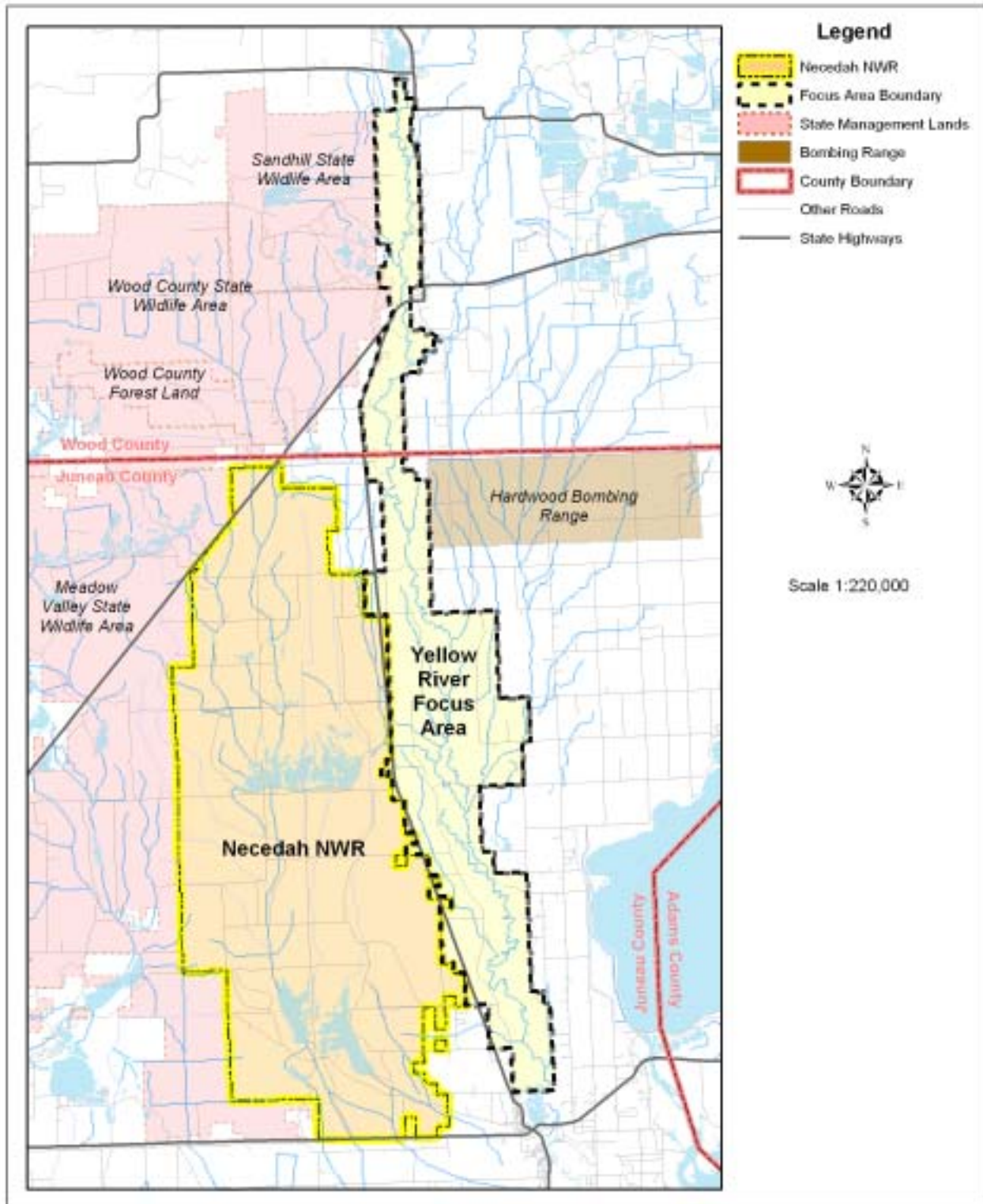
The Yellow River Focus Area (Figure 1) spans roughly 25 miles north and south by 2-3 miles east and west. The project represents a unique opportunity for the Service to conserve rare and declining bottomland forest and adjacent upland habitat for the benefit of migratory birds, threatened and endangered species, public recreation, and environmental education. Many rare, uncommon, and declining species of animals have been documented in the Yellow River Focus Area in recent years. Many of them are sensitive to size, isolation, context, and quality of habitat. These include the Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake, Blanding's turtle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Cerulean Warbler, Acadian Flycatcher, Yellow-crowned Night-heron, Prothonotary Warbler, and Louisiana Waterthrush. Several neo-tropical migrants that are suspected of or exhibiting extensive population declines that use the area include the Veery, Wood Thrush, Sedge Wren, Blue-winged Warbler, and Golden-winged Warbler. Waterfowl species include Mallard, Wood Duck, and Hooded Merganser. Bald Eagles utilize the area year-round and at least one active nest has been documented. Great Blue Heron rookeries are found in the Yellow River Area as well as extensive Wood Duck nesting. Federally listed endangered Karner blue butterflies are also found on Friendship and Plainfield soils throughout the area. These soil types offer potential for expansion of oak savanna and the restoration of essential Karner blue butterfly habitat. The Focus Area is referenced several times in the Draft Karner Blue Recovery Plan (see <http://midwest.fws.gov/Endangered/insects/kbb/kbb-rplan.html>).

Federal, state, and local conservation organizations strongly support stewardship and conservation of the Yellow River Focus Area (see attached letters). The Yellow River Focus Area project was developed out of the Central Wisconsin Basin Partnership (Partnership), which is a Partnership coordinated by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) that includes federal and state agencies, private conservation organizations, business and industry groups, university faculty, and others committed to conserving the Wisconsin River Basin. The Yellow River is a high priority Partnership project that includes the Upper Yellow River (a State of Wisconsin Priority Watershed project that emphasizes U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs and private partners), the Middle Yellow River (the Refuge's Yellow River Focus Area project that emphasizes private partnerships, easements, and land acquisition) and the Lower Yellow River (a Wisconsin DNR Focus Area). The Yellow River Focus area is referenced multiple times in the Karner Blue Butterfly Recovery Plan.

Threats To and Status of the Resource

The need for additional wildlife habitat conservation, restoration and management in the Yellow River Focus Area has been made clear by the declining status of numerous grassland, savanna, and wetland

Figure 1: The Yellow River Focus Area



dependent species of birds and numerous studies that have demonstrated that habitat loss or degradation is a common causal factor in many of those declines.

Of the estimated 221 million acres of wetland habitat present in the lower 48 states at the time of colonial America, only 103 million acres remain (47 percent). Draining, dredging, filling, leveling, and flooding have reduced wetlands by 50 percent or more in 22 states, and 10 states have lost 70 percent or more (Dahl 1990). Prior to European settlement, Wisconsin had approximately 10 million acres of wetlands. Currently less than 47 percent remain.

In recent years, many plant and animal species associated with Midwestern grasslands have experienced serious declines, primarily due to habitat loss and alteration of natural structure and function (e.g., predation, exotic species, fire suppression, habitat fragmentation, drainage/flooding). The original tallgrass prairie, which extended from western Indiana to the eastern part of Kansas, Nebraska, and North and South Dakota and south to Oklahoma and Texas, has been virtually eliminated throughout its historic range. Recent surveys suggest that 82.6 to 99.9 percent declines in the acreage of tallgrass prairie have occurred in 12 states and one Canadian province since European settlement. The State of Wisconsin has lost over 99 percent of its original prairies. For years following the initial conversion of native Midwestern prairies, many prairie-dependent wildlife remained relatively stable through their ability to colonize agricultural grasslands. However, 20th century agricultural grassland loss has followed a similar path of decline as native prairie loss in the 19th century. In many parts of the Midwest, agricultural grasslands are at their lowest level in more than 100 years.

Similarly, oak savanna, which covered approximately 27-32 million acres of the Midwest prior to European settlement (Nuzzo 1985), has become one of the nation's most endangered ecosystems (Noss et al. 1995). Nationwide, over 99 percent of our original savanna has been lost, and Midwestern oak savannas are among the rarest ecosystems in the nation. Historically, Wisconsin had roughly 4 million acres of savannas. Today, less than 60,000 acres remain, and much of what remains is highly degraded and of limited value for wildlife. Nuzzo (1985) found that by 1985 only 113 sites (2,607 acres) of quality oak savanna remained across the Midwest. Development has destroyed, fragmented, and disrupted the natural processes needed to maintain quality oak savanna ecosystems.

The wide-scale loss of oak savanna and pine barren ecosystems across 12 states and the province of Ontario, Canada, has had severe negative impacts on Karner blue butterflies (Karner Blue Butterfly Habitat Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, 1999). As a result, the Karner blue butterfly was proposed for federal listing on January 21, 1992, and listed as endangered on December 14, 1992. Today scattered populations are only found in portions of New Hampshire, New York, Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Minnesota. The Refuge is home to the world's largest remaining population of Karner blue butterflies, providing habitat for 12 population complexes. No critical habitat has been designated for this species. The long-term effect of these landscape-scale losses of important ecosystems has yet to be determined.

The long-term declines in early successional forests across the north-eastern and north-central United States has contributed to the decline of many bird species. Selective harvesting, fire suppression, urban sprawl, and cessation of agricultural abandonment contributed to the present imbalance in distribution of young forests (Oliver and Larson, 1999).

While rich in biological diversity, the Yellow River Area is experiencing degradation, primarily due to rural development and lack of habitat management. The Yellow River Area would benefit from habitat conservation and management practices designed to sustain its ecological value, namely conservation of habitat through financial incentives to landowners, prescribed fire, mowing, wetland and upland restorations, forest management. Recreational development pressures are high in the area. An expansion of agricultural activities could directly impact Yellow River habitats, and create many indirect impacts due to fragmentation, withdrawal and discharge of surface and ground waters, and

construction of infrastructure. Of late, a new round of human-induced change threatens many remaining ecosystems in the Yellow River Focus Area. In a trend called “rurbanization,” rural areas containing quality wildlife habitat are being converted to a more densely developed state. In recent years, the population surrounding the Refuge has expanded, while the size of the undeveloped land base continues to shrink, leaving many natural areas as scattered fragments of increased importance for scientific study, education, and conservation of natural ecological processes. According to the U.S. Census, the Town of Necedah and the Town of Finley grew by 34 percent and 27 percent, respectively, between 1990 and 2000. As a result, many of the large natural areas around the Refuge (and in the Yellow River Area) are at risk of being fragmented through housing development, driveways, etc., which diminishes the value of these areas for area-sensitive wildlife like the Bobolink, Prairie Chicken, and many large mammals. Habitat size, shape, and amount and type of edge are important factors in the reproductive success of many grassland birds. It is this type of development that particularly threatens the remaining oak savanna habitat in this region. Without management, most areas will continue to degrade due to their size, isolation, absence of natural processes such as fire and hydrologic cycle maintenance, and inadequate buffers protecting them from surrounding agricultural and urban land uses. It also places greater demands on the Refuge and its partners in terms of safeguarding Refuge ecosystem structure and function for the benefit of Service trust resources.

The Yellow River Focus Area provides a unique opportunity for the Service to conserve rare and declining bottomland forest and adjacent upland habitat for the benefit of listed species, waterfowl and other migratory birds, and native biological diversity. According to Wisconsin’s Statewide Natural Area Inventory, extensive field reconnaissance by the Refuge and other sources, the Yellow River Area represents one of the few remaining quality bottomland hardwood forest ecosystems in the Midwest. Silver maple, swamp white oak, green ash, and river birch dominate the floodplain, while the lower sandy ridges, slightly higher than the flood plain, support white oak, bur oak, shagbark hickory, basswood, and white pine. The highest of these areas were once oak and pine savannas, one of North America’s most endangered habitats, with only .02 percent of its pre-settlement acreage remaining. The shrub spectrum within the area varies in density from sparse to impenetrable, and includes buttonbush, dogwoods, prickly ash, winterberry, and wild grapes. The herbaceous layer of the forested areas support wood nettle, coneflowers, ferns, and many sedges. Aggressive non-native species are currently not an issue within the area. Table 1 summarizes land cover types found within the Yellow River Focus Area.

Table 1: Current Land Cover Types in the Yellow River Focus Area

Land Cover Type	Acres
Open Landscapes (grasslands, savannas, shrub land, old fields, agricultural lands)	2,593
Coniferous Forests	483
Mixed Deciduous and Coniferous Forests	1,329
Broad-leaf Deciduous Forests	3,909
Emergent Wetlands and Wet Meadows	1,847
Forested Wetlands	10,259
Lowland Shrubs	1,485
Open Water Areas	45
Total all cover types in the Yellow River Focus Area	21,953

Many Federal, state, and local conservation organizations support stewardship and conservation of the natural resources in the Yellow River area. Several property owners have indicated an interest in selling their land and/or a conservation easement on their land to the Service. Many landowners within the 21,953-acre Yellow River Focus Area have contacted the Refuge in recent years in search of technical assistance in managing their land for wildlife. The Refuge strives to accommodate these landowners through its Partners for Wildlife Program and by facilitating technical assistance through partnerships with other government and non-government entities.

Proposed Action

The Service is proposing to facilitate the restoration, conservation, and management of up to 21,953 acres of land within the Yellow River Focus Area. Of the total acreage, 3,135 acres are in public ownership already. The Service would work with landowners and governmental agencies in the northern 4,748-acre portion of the Focus Area (Figure 2) through voluntary partnerships to accomplish the conservation goals. In the 17,234 acre southern portion (Figure 2), the Service's first priority would also be to work with landowners and agencies through voluntary partnerships to conserve and restore habitats. However, if private landowners in the southern portion were only interested in selling an easement or fee-title to their land, the Service would consider acquisition there, depending upon the tract's priority and the availability of funds. There are 14,684 acres of private land in the southern portion, amounting to 67 percent of the entire 21,953 acre focus area.

Protection Alternatives

This section outlines and evaluates three strategic alternatives for the restoration and conservation of approximately 21,953 acres of wetland, upland, and riparian habitats within the Yellow River Focus Area. See the Necedah NWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan Environmental Assessment for a more detailed description of the alternatives.

Alternative 1& 2:

Under Alternatives 1 and 2, the Service would not seek realty interests in land and water within the Yellow River Focus Area. The Refuge would continue to offer landowners support through the Refuge's Partners for Wildlife program. The wetlands, uplands, plants, wildlife, and people of the area would continue to be impacted by the lack of a central management plan for the area, which may lead to residential and agricultural development in undesirable locations or proportions, unmonitored water quality changes, declines in quality recreational and aesthetic experiences, and declines in the economic value of the Yellow River to local communities. Waterfowl, Sandhill Cranes, other waterbirds, songbirds, fish, and many resident wildlife species would likely decrease over time as habitat degradation occurred. Unique plant communities could be degraded or lost due to conversion of additional wetlands to agricultural lands, namely cranberry production. Archeological resources would be offered little conservation and subject to loss. Public use opportunities would be limited to private landowners, others with permission from landowners, and the general public on the public lands in the area.

Alternative 3: (Preferred)

Under this alternative, the Service would seek to partner in habitat restoration and conservation efforts with the public land managers and with the private landowners within the Partnership Area 1 portion of the Focus Area (northern portion of the Focus Area). Land acquisition by the Service is not an option in this area but the Service would be able to provide technical assistance and possibly financial assistance through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. Within that portion of the Focus Area designated as Partnership Area 2 (southern portion of the Focus Area), the Service could also provide technical and financial assistance through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife program. However, the Service would also facilitate the conservation of approximately 250 acres per year from willing sellers using outreach and technical assistance, cooperative management agreements, conservation easements and fee-title purchase of land (and/or donations from private parties) or a

combination of all methods, depending on site, circumstances, and landowner interests. The estimate of 250 acres per year is based upon historical land acquisition funding levels in Region 3 of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, which includes Wisconsin. Only the private ownerships in the area would be eligible for Service acquisition and then only if the landowner was interested.

In addition, the Service would seek to partner with the public agencies holding 3,134 acres of land within the entire Focus Area, however; acquisition of easements or fee-interest would not be an option on those lands. This alternative would lead to additional restoration and conservation of wetlands, uplands, and riparian habitats for the benefit of trust resources (assuming adequate funding). Any acquisition of lands would be from willing sellers only, regardless of the type of interest. The Service would only acquire the minimum interest necessary to reach management objectives for this area.

Areas acquired in fee-title through donation or purchase would be owned by the Service and managed as units of the National Wildlife Refuge System – Necedah NWR. Tracts in which an easement or lease is negotiated would remain in private ownership. Under any acquisition scenario, administration and management of the tracts would be done by the staff at Necedah NWR. This alternative would be carried out on a tract-by-tract basis as land and funding become available over an undetermined period of time.

Alternative Conservation Tools

The alternative conservation tools proposed for the Yellow River Focus Area are fee acquisition, conservation easements, wildlife management agreements, and private lands extension agreements. Other acquisition methods that could be utilized by the Service include donations, partial donations, or transfers.

Wildlife Management Agreements

These agreements are negotiated between the Refuge Manager and a landowner and specify a particular management action the landowner will do, or not do, with his or her property. For example, a simple agreement would be for the landowner to agree to delay hayland mowing until after a certain date to allow ground nesting birds to hatch their young. More comprehensive agreements are possible for such things as wetland or upland restoration, or public access. These agreements are strictly voluntary on the part of the landowner and are voided if the property is sold.

As long as a landowner abides by the terms of the agreement, this conservation can be effective in meeting certain conservation objectives. Unfortunately, because these agreements are voluntary and temporary, there is no long-term assurance the terms will continue to be met.

Direct Service costs for this alternative are generally low, but can add up to near fee or easement costs if the agreement is for several years. Staff time and administrative costs are relatively high since agreements must be monitored yearly and renegotiated when land ownership changes.

Leases

Under a lease agreement, the Service would negotiate with a landowner to receive use of the land or for some maintenance of the land in a given condition. Generally, the landowner would receive an annual lease payment. For example, the Service could lease 40 acres of grassland habitat to provide safe nesting for ground nesting birds. The landowner would not be able to hay or otherwise disturb the ground during the lease period.

Cost effectiveness of leases would vary depending on the length and payment terms of the lease. In many cases, the cost of a lease rapidly approaches the cost of outright purchase in a few years. Also, leases do not offer the long-term conservation of habitat, and are more complex for the Service to administer than fee or easement because of the monitoring, coordination, and administration requirements.

Conservation Easements

With a conservation easement, the Service in effect purchases a specific interest from a private landowner. For example, the Service may purchase a wetland easement that protects a wetland from draining, filling, and burning. The landowner gives up his or her right to drain, fill, and burn, but no other land rights. The wetland may still be cropped, or hayed, as natural conditions allow.

An easement that is commonly used on refuges is a conservation or non-development easement. Typically, a landowner would agree to refrain from commercial, industrial, or residential development or other major alteration of habitat. The landowner may continue to use the land as before the easement and retains rights such as hunting, control of trespass, etc.

Easements are voluntary and purchased only from willing sellers. Payments for conservation easements are generally based on a percentage of the appraised value of the land and varies according to the use restrictions imposed. Easements are most often perpetual and compensation is a one-time, up-front payment.

Easements can be useful when existing land uses on a tract within a refuge boundary are partially compatible with refuge purposes, and when the landowner desires to use the land for some compatible purpose. Examples of land uses that are normally restricted under terms of a conservation include:

- Development rights, both agricultural, commercial and residential.
- Alteration of natural topography.
- Uses negatively affecting the maintenance of plant and wildlife communities.
- Excessive public access and use; and
- Alteration of natural water level.

Depending on the type of easement, this option may be cost effective in meeting certain Refuge management purposes. If the easement is not perpetual, long-term resource conservation is not guaranteed. However, some easements may cost the Service so much (occasionally greater than 75 percent of fee value), that cost efficiency is compromised.

Easements are more difficult to manage than fee title transactions because of the monitoring, coordination, and administrative requirements. If a landowner fails to honor the easement contract, the Service must take steps to re-establish the terms of the contract.

In the short run, easements have more impact on the tax base of local municipalities than cooperative management agreements and leases. However, they have less impact in the short run on the tax base than fee-title acquisition. In the long run, Service acquisition of interest in Yellow River lands may be beneficial to the tax base of local municipalities because of increased desirability of land, increased access to land management services, and increased recreational opportunities.

Fee-Title Acquisition

A fee-title acquisition of land assures permanent conservation of resources and complete control of lands necessary for things such as wetland development and water level control. All rights of ownership are transferred to the Service in fee title acquisition. Land is purchased only from willing sellers with offers based on fair market value appraisals. Some fee title acquisitions are accomplished through donation or exchange. Although initially the most costly for the Service, in the long run it is easier to manage and plan for because the Service has complete control. Staff time is saved by not having to renegotiate terms for less-than-fee title arrangements.

There are approximately 3,135 acres in public ownership in the Focus Area. The overall cost of the project if all private lands within Alternative 3, the Preferred Alternative (14,684 acres) were acquired

would be in the vicinity of \$14,684,000 based upon an average cost per acre of about \$1,000. The reality is that much of the area would not be acquired. Many of the landowners are interested in conserving or improving habitat themselves, reducing the need to acquire the land. Others are probably not interested in selling.

In the short run, fee-title acquisition will have the greatest impact on the tax base of local municipalities of any alternative conservation tools. In the long run, Service acquisition of interest in Yellow River lands may be beneficial to the tax base of local municipalities because of increased desirability of land, increased access to land management services, and increased recreational opportunities.

It should be noted that lands acquired within the Focus Area would involve low operations and maintenance costs. Private landowner agreements have already begun the work of conserving or restoring habitats. Much of the management would be passive, low cost in nature, ensuring that development or other disruptive land use practices do not destroy the wildlife value of the area.

Coordination and Consultation

The Service publicly announced it was preparing a CCP for the Refuge in June 1997. Since that time, information about the planning project, as well as the Service's intent to evaluate the feasibility of restoring and conserving additional habitat in the Yellow River Focus Area, has been provided to the public through news-releases, presentations, interviews, informational letters, and one-on-one briefings. Federal, state, local, and private entities were involved in the scoping process. More than 6,000 people were sent information on the Refuge CCP. This includes Wisconsin's Congressional Delegation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, elected officials representing Juneau and Wood counties, Wisconsin DNR personnel, local governments, representatives of national, state, and local conservation organizations, neighboring landowners, and other interested publics. Public input was considered at all phases of the CCP planning process. All landowners within the Yellow River Focus Area were contacted. The Service held several meetings with Yellow River Focus Area landowners to discuss conservation strategies. The Service has met with nearly every landowner one-on-one in the project area. To date, 121 landowners collectively owning 17,308 acres have requested technical from the Service. Of these, 16 have signed long-term wildlife management agreements encompassing 1,233 acres of land in the Yellow River Focus Area. The Service coordinated its scoping effort closely, and corresponded frequently with many of the aforementioned entities, including Yellow River Focus Area landowners.

Sociocultural Impacts

Restoration, conservation, and management of additional lands by the Service in the Yellow River Focus Area will affect to some degree the current lifestyles of individuals in and around the proposed project area, and the communities in the area. Landowners who choose to sell their land to the Service will be most affected. Owners of homes or farms who relocate will be reimbursed for moving expenses. Renters also receive certain relocation benefits, including assistance in finding suitable alternate housing that is affordable. Under certain conditions, some homeowners may be able to reserve a "life estate" on their homes, meaning they could remain in their homes for the rest of their lives after selling to the Service. This type of reservation does, however, reduce the amount paid for their homes. Other landowners who negotiate easements or other less-than-fee transactions may have to change certain land management practices in-line with conditions of the easement.

All land transactions will be purely voluntary in keeping with Service policy to purchase lands or rights only from willing sellers. The property rights of landowners who choose not to sell their land will not be directly affected by purchases around them since they will retain all right of landownership. The Service will always take into account the interests of adjacent landowners when managing acquired land.

Use of the Refuge and surrounding area will probably increase over current levels. This increased use, and thus traffic, may make some landowners uncomfortable. Lands in which the Service acquires a fee interest will eventually be open to public hunting, fishing, hiking, photography, canoeing, and other compatible refuge uses.

A comprehensive resource, facility, and public use management plan will be completed after a sufficient land base has been acquired in the area by the Service. This plan will be written with full input from the landowners and the general public to meet their needs and address their concerns.

Summary of Proposed Action

As described earlier, the Service proposes to restore and conserve up to 21,953 acres of wetlands, uplands, and riparian habitats within the Yellow River Focus Area. Of this acreage, the conservation and restoration efforts on the approximately 7,298 acres held by private landowners in the north and public agencies throughout the Focus Area would be through voluntary technical assistance programs. On the approximately 14,684 acres of private land in the southern portion of the Focus Area (Partner Area 2), the Service would seek habitat restoration and conservation on a voluntary basis from landowners through technical assistance, and where it was the landowners preference, by acquiring fee title or conservation easements.

The following is a ranked list of priorities for conserving lands in the Yellow River Focus Area. Service acquisition of fee or easement interests in lands would be available only to interested landowners in the southern portion of the area (Partner Area 2, Figure 3). This list will guide Service in choosing when and where to use the various available conservation tools. The list includes criteria that would rank the priority of a parcel of land considered for fee title purchase in the southern portion of the Focus Area, although other conservation tools would always be considered first.

This list will assure that the limited resources available to the Service and its partners are used in ways that efficiently and effectively promote desired outcomes in the Yellow River. It is also reflective of the Service's commitment to communicate clearly to Yellow River stakeholders and to be consistent and equitable in its interactions with Yellow River landowners.

High Priority Land:

- Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake documented on parcel during most recent survey.
- Karner blue butterflies documented on parcel during most recent survey.
- Other federal or state listed species documented on parcel during most recent survey.
- Existing eastern massasauga habitat within 1 mile of a recent documented sightings (within the past 20 years) or existing populations.
- Existing Karner blue butterfly habitat within 1 mile in open landscape, or within 1/8 mile without open canopy corridor, of existing populations or recent documented sightings (within the past 5 years).
- Bottomland habitat associated with Algansee-Glendora soils.

Medium Priority Land:

- Restorable eastern massasauga habitat within 1 mile of recent documented sightings (within the past 20 years) or existing populations.
- Restorable Karner blue butterfly habitat within 1 mile in open landscape, or 1/8 mile without open canopy corridor, of existing populations or recent documented sightings (within the past 5 years).
- Existing eastern massasauga habitat 1-3 miles from recent documented sightings (within the past 20 years) or existing populations.

- Natural heritage elements that are not covered by previously listed categories (e.g. federal or state listing), but have a global ranking of G3 or higher and/or with a state ranking of S3 or higher.
- Opportunities to manage habitat blocks greater than 160 acres in size.
- Opportunities to manage habitat blocks with contiguous upland and wetland habitat.

Low Priority Land:

- Opportunities to manage habitat blocks greater than 80 contiguous acres, but less than 160 contiguous acres.
- Other quality fish and wildlife habitats or community types.

While the future condition of the lands in the Focus Area are unknown and recognizing that changes in land use or species occurrence could change the conservation priorities, the tracts within the Focus Area have been prioritized for conservation on the following maps (Figure 2) and in the attached table (Table 2). The Focus Area acreage in Table 2 is 21,982 compared to the 21,953 acres that is used elsewhere in this document. Acreage in Table 2 is calculated via the ArcView Geographic Information System program and includes roads that would be excluded from the actual ownership acreage.

There are 319 tracts total in the Focus Area, of which 301 are privately owned. There are approximately 261 individual private owners, some of which are corporate. Eighteen of the tracts are owned by a village, county, or the State of Wisconsin. There is no intention to purchase the publicly owned property. There are approximately 3,135 acres in public ownership and approximately 18,847 acres in private ownership. Of the private ownership, 14,684 acres in Partner Area 2 would be eligible for Service acquisition, and then only from willing sellers.

Conservation of any tract in the Focus Area would first be sought by working with the landowners to achieve conservation goals they are interested in and that are consistent with Service interests. If a landowner in the southern portion of the Focus Area is interested in other options, such as an easement or in selling fee rights to the property, the Service would base its decision of whether to acquire an interest in the land upon the availability of funds and the priority of the tract for conservation. Assistance to landowners for conservation work on their property will be provided through the Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and through any other programs that may be available in the future.

Figure 2: Land Status and Conservation Options, Yellow River Focus Area, Necedah NWR

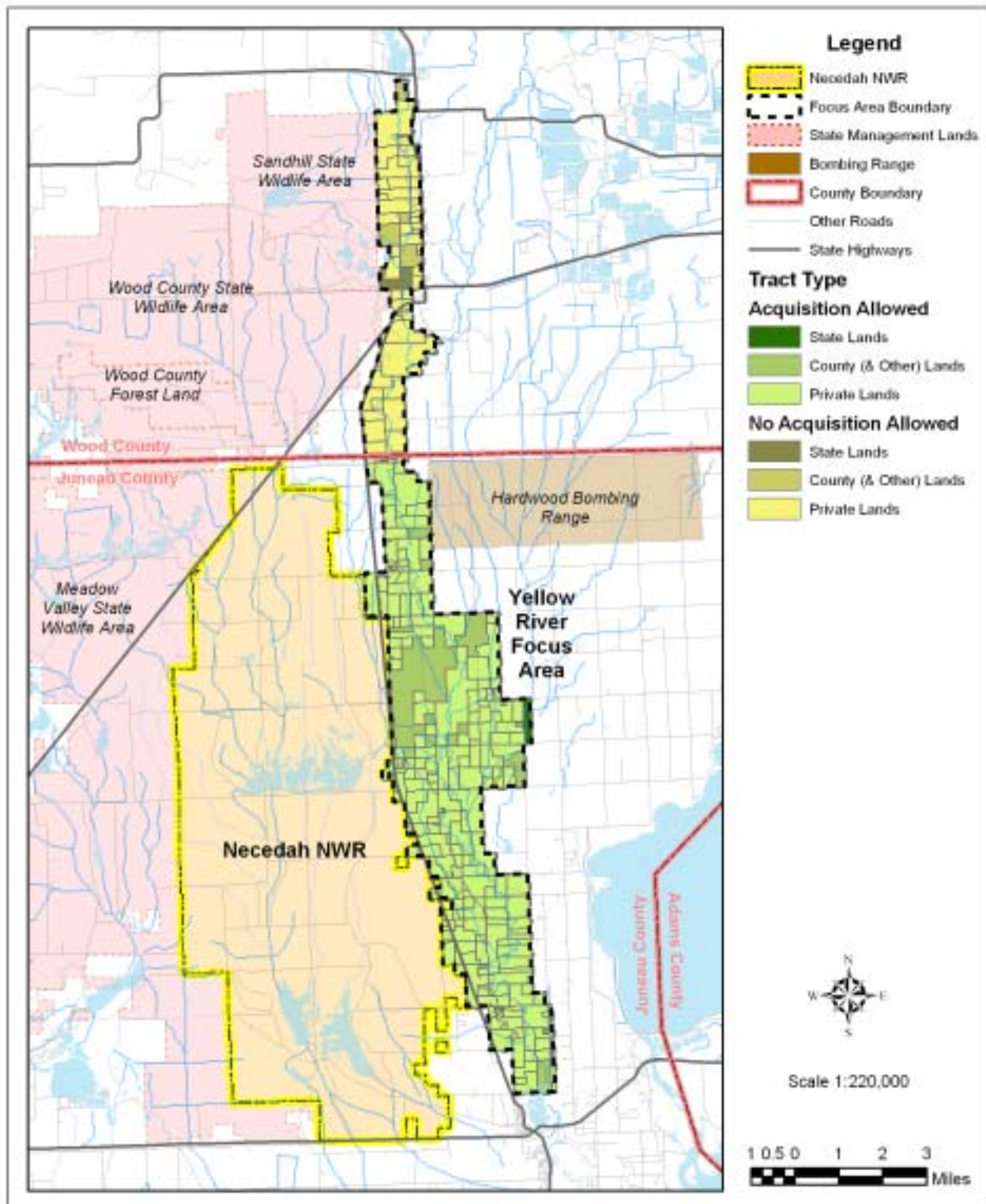


Table 2: Yellow River Focus Area Tracts, Ownership, Acreage and Priority

Parcel No.	Owners	Acres	Priority	Is Acquisition an Option?
2	Wood County FCL	71.97	higher	NO
3	Private	435.91	higher	NO
4	Private	7.32	higher	NO
5	Private	4.03	lower	NO
6	Private	39.86	higher	NO
7	Private	116.82	lower	NO
8	Private	81.50	lower	NO
10	Private	148.40	lower	NO
11	Private	114.06	higher	NO
12	Private	38.15	medium	NO
13	Private	77.14	lower	NO
14	Private	37.52	lower	NO
15	Private	96.08	lower	NO
16	Private	37.95	higher	NO
17	Private	18.72	lower	NO
18	Private	48.18	higher	NO
19	Private	141.83	lower	NO
21	Private	21.78	higher	NO
22	Wood County FCL	43.81	higher	NO
23	Private	75.17	lower	NO
24	Private	20.78	lower	NO
25	Private	22.76	lower	NO
26	Private	44.38	higher	NO
27	Wood County FCL	149.90	higher	NO
28	Private	20.35	lower	NO
30	Private	81.47	higher	NO
31	Private	11.56	lower	NO
32	J. T. School District #1	141.29	higher	NO
33	Private	36.16	lower	NO
34	Private	11.38	lower	NO
35	Private	103.93	higher	NO
36	Private	32.90	higher	NO
38	State of WI/Conservation Com	177.26	higher	NO
39	Private	44.70	lower	NO

Table 2: Yellow River Focus Area Tracts, Ownership, Acreage and Priority

Parcel No.	Owners	Acres	Priority	Is Acquisition an Option?
40	Private	37.41	higher	NO
41	Private	34.57	higher	NO
42	Private	74.15	lower	NO
43	Private	23.40	lower	NO
44	Private	37.68	higher	NO
45	Private	3.83	lower	NO
46	Private	247.37	lower	NO
51	Private	500.50	lower	NO
52	Private	8.97	lower	NO
53	Private	8.36	lower	NO
54	Private	42.56	higher	NO
55	Private	100.14	higher	NO
57	Private	118.66	higher	NO
58	Private	100.61	lower	NO
60	Private	228.10	higher	NO
61	Private	42.94	higher	NO
62	Private	77.18	lower	NO
63	Private	153.79	lower	NO
64	Private	10.15	higher	YES
65	Private	12.39	higher	NO
66	Private	47.22	higher	YES
67	Private	91.64	higher	YES
68	Private	93.02	higher	YES
69	Private	133.98	higher	YES
70	Private	80.67	higher	YES
71	Juneau County Forest Crop	84.39	higher	NO
72	Private	85.05	higher	NO
73	Private	172.55	higher	Yes
74	Private	79.64	higher	Yes
75	Private	5.57	higher	Yes
76	Private	29.72	higher	Yes
77	Juneau County (Tax Deed)	44.86	higher	No
78	Private	22.59	higher	Yes
79	Private	10.53	higher	Yes
80	Private	16.93	higher	Yes

Table 2: Yellow River Focus Area Tracts, Ownership, Acreage and Priority

Parcel No.	Owners	Acres	Priority	Is Acquisition an Option?
81	Private	9.58	higher	Yes
82	Private	4.92	higher	Yes
83	Private	2.85	higher	Yes
84	Private	2.85	higher	Yes
85	Private	6.39	higher	Yes
86	Private	174.30	higher	Yes
87	Private	40.74	higher	Yes
88	Private	42.98	higher	Yes
89	Private	8.14	higher	Yes
90	Private	193.13	higher	Yes
91	Private	1.46	higher	Yes
92	Private	46.26	higher	Yes
93	Private	0.90	higher	Yes
94	Private	83.69	higher	Yes
95	Private	68.42	higher	Yes
96	Private	84.75	higher	Yes
97	Private	85.06	higher	Yes
98	Private	80.05	higher	Yes
99	Private	85.57	higher	Yes
100	Juneau County Forest Crop	305.34	higher	No
102	Private	1.83	higher	Yes
103	Private	18.61	higher	Yes
104	Private	21.19	higher	Yes
105	Private	38.84	higher	Yes
106	Private	79.25	higher	Yes
107	Private	224.02	higher	Yes
108	Private	117.97	higher	Yes
109	Juneau County (Tax Deed)	39.73	higher	No
110	Private	42.08	higher	Yes
111	Private	38.42	higher	Yes
112	Private	40.57	higher	Yes
113	Private	40.54	higher	Yes
114	Private	253.42	higher	Yes
115	Private	3.75	higher	Yes
117	Private	43.17	higher	Yes

Table 2: Yellow River Focus Area Tracts, Ownership, Acreage and Priority

Parcel No.	Owners	Acres	Priority	Is Acquisition an Option?
119	Private	77.40	higher	Yes
120	Private	122.17	higher	Yes
121	Juneau County Forest Crop	38.28	higher	No
122	Private	39.48	higher	Yes
123	Private	11.66	higher	Yes
124	Private	61.11	higher	Yes
125	Private	28.11	higher	Yes
126	Private	92.19	higher	Yes
127	Private	20.79	higher	Yes
128	Private	6.42	higher	Yes
129	Private	118.58	higher	Yes
130	Private	200.33	higher	Yes
131	Private	5.42	higher	Yes
133	Private	3.89	higher	Yes
134	Private	10.55	higher	Yes
135	Private	18.92	higher	Yes
136	Private	25.74	higher	Yes
137	Private	57.78	higher	Yes
138	Private	39.37	higher	Yes
139	Private	2.60	higher	Yes
141	Private	140.77	higher	Yes
142	Private	12.94	higher	Yes
143	Private	39.53	higher	Yes
144	Private	83.78	higher	Yes
145	Private	35.28	higher	Yes
146	Private	3.10	higher	Yes
147	Private	39.17	higher	Yes
148	Private	27.37	higher	Yes
149	Private	88.53	higher	Yes
151	Private	81.32	higher	Yes
155	Private	85.41	higher	Yes
157	Private	35.92	higher	Yes
158	Private	1.88	higher	Yes
159	Private	76.25	higher	Yes
160	Private	160.94	lower	Yes

Table 2: Yellow River Focus Area Tracts, Ownership, Acreage and Priority

Parcel No.	Owners	Acres	Priority	Is Acquisition an Option?
162	Private	166.55	higher	Yes
163	Private	83.33	higher	Yes
164	Private	74.06	higher	Yes
165	Private	11.09	higher	Yes
166	Private	39.38	higher	Yes
167	Private	36.85	lower	Yes
169	Private	20.68	higher	Yes
170	Private	36.73	higher	Yes
171	Private	38.94	higher	Yes
172	Private	29.63	higher	Yes
173	Private	86.23	higher	Yes
174	Private	40.14	higher	Yes
175	Private	18.31	higher	Yes
176	Private	18.46	higher	Yes
177	Private	12.96	higher	Yes
178	Private	22.79	higher	Yes
179	Private	20.47	higher	Yes
180	Private	102.74	higher	Yes
181	Private	13.46	higher	Yes
182	Private	94.50	higher	Yes
183	Private	39.30	higher	Yes
184	Private	28.51	higher	Yes
185	Private	39.57	higher	Yes
186	Private	21.11	higher	Yes
187	Private	9.36	higher	Yes
188	Private	71.11	higher	Yes
189	Private	2.38	higher	Yes
190	Private	80.69	higher	Yes
191	Private	69.12	higher	Yes
192	Private	34.96	higher	Yes
193	Private	85.45	higher	Yes
194	Private	129.26	higher	Yes
195	Private	61.67	higher	Yes
196	Private	126.20	higher	Yes
197	Private	106.15	higher	Yes

Table 2: Yellow River Focus Area Tracts, Ownership, Acreage and Priority

Parcel No.	Owners	Acres	Priority	Is Acquisition an Option?
198	Private	128.03	higher	Yes
199	Private	6.43	higher	Yes
200	Private	6.48	higher	Yes
201	Private	21.58	higher	Yes
202	Private	58.52	higher	Yes
203	Private	148.09	higher	Yes
205	Private	1.25	higher	Yes
207	Private	9.64	lower	Yes
208	Private	70.87	higher	Yes
210	Private	33.16	higher	Yes
211	Private	6.04	higher	Yes
212	Private	37.79	lower	Yes
213	Private	8.34	lower	Yes
214	Private	0.63	lower	Yes
215	Private	1.07	lower	Yes
216	Private	0.58	lower	Yes
217	Private	135.83	higher	Yes
218	Private	46.51	lower	Yes
220	Private	46.06	higher	Yes
221	Private	70.32	lower	Yes
222	Private	0.99	lower	Yes
223	Private	2.56	lower	Yes
224	Private	0.96	lower	Yes
232	Private	145.96	higher	Yes
233	Private	75.85	lower	Yes
234	Private	34.91	higher	NO
235	Private	14.69	higher	NO
236	Private	25.51	lower	NO
237	Private	10.51	higher	NO
238	Private	9.96	higher	NO
239	Private	12.77	higher	NO
240	Private	40.79	higher	Yes
241	Private	181.41	higher	Yes
242	Private	43.11	higher	Yes
243	Private	379.20	higher	Yes

Table 2: Yellow River Focus Area Tracts, Ownership, Acreage and Priority

Parcel No.	Owners	Acres	Priority	Is Acquisition an Option?
244	Juneau County Forest Crop	1,436.97	higher	No
245	Private	707.79	higher	Yes
247	Juneau County Forest Crop	40.04	higher	No
248	Private	36.58	higher	Yes
249	Private	45.14	higher	Yes
250	Juneau County Forest Crop	41.05	higher	No
251	Juneau County Forest Crop	41.26	higher	No
252	Private	43.85	higher	Yes
254	Private	26.75	higher	Yes
255	Juneau County (Tax Deed)	38.45	higher	No
256	Private	78.19	higher	Yes
257	Private	158.74	higher	Yes
258	Private	118.36	higher	Yes
259	Private	81.30	higher	Yes
260	Private	55.66	higher	Yes
261	Private	40.40	higher	Yes
262	Private	29.37	higher	Yes
263	Private	8.51	higher	Yes
264	Private	10.98	higher	Yes
265	Private	11.58	higher	Yes
266	Private	17.35	higher	Yes
268	Private	40.44	higher	Yes
269	Private	38.22	higher	Yes
270	Private	42.13	higher	Yes
271	Private	75.80	higher	Yes
272	Private	159.73	higher	Yes
273	Private	18.94	higher	Yes
274	Private	1.02	higher	Yes
275	Private	117.36	higher	Yes
276	Private	304.03	higher	Yes
277	Private	52.83	higher	Yes
278	Private	118.44	higher	Yes
279	Private	161.29	higher	Yes
280	Private	76.20	higher	Yes
281	Private	163.97	higher	Yes

Table 2: Yellow River Focus Area Tracts, Ownership, Acreage and Priority

Parcel No.	Owners	Acres	Priority	Is Acquisition an Option?
282	Private	77.33	higher	Yes
283	Private	44.32	higher	Yes
284	Private	79.95	higher	Yes
285	Private	226.49	higher	Yes
286	Private	40.54	higher	Yes
287	Private	7.27	higher	Yes
288	Private	18.57	lower	Yes
289	Private	4.53	lower	Yes
290	Private	50.54	higher	Yes
291	Village of Necedah	159.88	higher	No
292	Private	42.60	higher	Yes
293	Private	24.78	lower	Yes
294	Private	2.46	higher	Yes
295	Private	2.15	lower	Yes
296	Private	5.59	higher	Yes
297	Private	90.70	higher	Yes
298	Private	5.93	lower	Yes
299	Private	58.83	higher	Yes
300	Private	70.01	higher	Yes
301	Private	76.90	higher	Yes
302	State of WI, Dept. of Nat. Resources	119.71	higher	No
303	Private	4.88	higher	Yes
304	Private	24.62	lower	Yes
305	Private	4.45	higher	Yes
306	Private	109.36	higher	Yes
307	Private	142.06	higher	Yes
308	Private	25.25	higher	Yes
309	Private	61.14	higher	Yes
310	Private	58.71	higher	Yes
311	Private	20.96	higher	Yes
312	Private	39.34	higher	Yes
313	Private	22.50	higher	Yes
314	Private	9.94	higher	Yes
315	Private	33.45	higher	Yes

Table 2: Yellow River Focus Area Tracts, Ownership, Acreage and Priority

Parcel No.	Owners	Acres	Priority	Is Acquisition an Option?
316	Private	160.85	higher	Yes
317	Private	40.96	higher	Yes
318	Private	44.78	higher	Yes
319	Private	36.67	higher	Yes
320	Private	11.18	lower	Yes
321	Private	3.42	lower	Yes
322	Private	190.62	lower	Yes
323	Private	27.72	higher	Yes
324	Private	22.15	higher	Yes
325	Private	201.08	higher	Yes
326	Private	9.38	lower	Yes
327	Private	79.44	higher	Yes
328	Private	3.91	lower	Yes
329	Private	2.78	higher	Yes
330	Private	14.03	medium	Yes
331	Private	116.69	higher	Yes
332	Private	8.45	lower	Yes
333	Private	123.24	higher	Yes
334	Private	78.24	higher	Yes
335	Private	37.66	higher	Yes
336	Private	38.35	higher	Yes
337	Private	40.39	higher	Yes
338	Private	40.70	higher	Yes
339	Private	182.06	medium	Yes
340	Private	123.89	higher	Yes
341	Private	51.23	higher	Yes
342	Private	1.71	higher	Yes
343	Private	10.83	medium	Yes
344	Juneau County Community Forest	160.44	higher	No
345	Private	20.70	higher	Yes
346	Private	14.05	medium	Yes
347	Private	38.51	higher	Yes
348	Private	40.29	higher	Yes
349	Private	58.81	lower	Yes

Table 2: Yellow River Focus Area Tracts, Ownership, Acreage and Priority

Parcel No.	Owners	Acre	Priority	Is Acquisition an Option?
350	Private	15.93	medium	Yes
351	Private	5.24	lower	Yes
352	Private	38.54	lower	Yes
353	Private	108.38	higher	Yes
354	Private	41.73	higher	Yes
355	Private	122.16	higher	Yes
356	Private	82.28	higher	Yes
Total Acres:		21,982.22		
Total Tracts:		319		
Total # Private Tracts:		301		
Total # of Publicly Owned Tracts:		18		
Total Acres Privately Owned:		18,847.59		
Total Acres Publicly Owned:		3,134.63		
Total Acres where Acquisition is an Option:		14,683.9		
Total Acres where Acquisition is Not an Option		7,298.32		

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